3: Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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775 In this description of an after life, there was a marked mixture of ideas. The idea of multiple souls is Siouan, the rest is more or less common over most of the region.

776 821 As usual in the plains area every natural phenomenon and unaccountable event was mystery or medicine, and the medicine idea played the usual important part in all their religious customs. Thunder was ascribed to the familiar thunder-bird, the glitter of whose eyes dug a path through the clouds for the rain and caused the lightning.[1] Solitary claps of thunder were ascribed to a huge turtle which lived in the clouds. The rainbow was said to be a spirit which accompanies the sun and which shows itself when the sun retires for the night. The aurora borealis was said to be the fire kindled at an assembly of the great medicine men and warriors of the northern nations, over which they cooked their dead enemies in huge pots.[2] They had several beliefs about the stars—that of the Sioux, that each star is a man, and when a child is born the star comes down and when he dies it returns; also that a multitude of supernatural beings existed in the stars to which sacrifices and prayers were offered. Dreams were of very great importance and governed nearly all their acts. [787]

789 843 There were many small personal superstitions or mysteries. One man told Maximilian that he could turn a snowball into a white stone, another claimed that his nose always bled if he picked up his pipe by the bowl. There were many signs of good and bad luck. A pregnant woman was considered to bring luck at the game of Skohpe. The medicine men told them that if a clay image of an enemy were made with a needle or quill in it for a heart, and were placed at the foot of some medicine structure, that enemy would die. A pregnant woman brings bad luck to her husband in hunting. Many of the Mandans believed that they had some animal, as a buffalo, turtle or frog in them; the women had a dance when they thought an ear of corn was in them, which the dance caused to come out.[3] There were a number of other superstitions of this sort, mostly common to all the plains tribes. One more notable might be mentioned, however, that of building the fire with two sticks crossed in the center, ● 372

[1] Ibid., p. 422. [2] Ibid., p. 423. [3] Ibid., p. 463.

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which were pushed in as they burnt. This was done because the First Man told them they must never have a big fire after the day's cooking was done and showed them how it should be built. It recalls the sacred fire of the Muskogi and other tribes of the lower Mississippi. They declared that many of the every day customs were taught them thus and consequently they always did them a certain way,—thus Ochkih-Hedde taught them to tattoo themselves, and their first chief taught them to kill buffalo and to make shields.

The Mandans practiced penances and sacrifices, especially self-torture which they carried to great extremes. Their medicine or personal guardian spirit was acquired by three or four days fasting and self injury, after which the medicine, often an animal, appeared to the candidate in a dream. This ceremony was also taught to them by Ochkih-Hedde. No expedition or enterprise was undertaken without a liberal sacrifice to some supernatural being, either by offering valuable goods or by physical self-torture. Finger joints were frequently cut off as an offering to the gods and fasting was common as a propitiation. Often a day or more would be spent near one of the medicine scaffolds in groaning, praying and weeping. Lewis and Clarke relate that finger joints were also cut off as a sign of mourning, which Maximilian denies, and Catlin tells how such a sacrifice was a part of the catalogue of tortures in the great Okeepa dance. The custom of consecrating personal property is found here as among the neighboring tribes. A man could make his gun, his horse, his pipe and other similar articles medicine by going through certain ceremonies, most important of which was the giving of a feast. The feast[1] was announced by a public crier, a certain number of guests were invited, the invitations being originally little rods and later playing cards. The drum and rattle made the round of the company. Then the article was consecrated; if a gun, it was rubbed with meal several times, with soup, and lastly with fat, after which the feast took place.

There were many shrines and sacred articles among the Mandans, but judging from the accounts, the sacred bundles or

[1] Maximilian: p. 463.

10: Neill H-4(no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

and treasures, as it contains every thing he values most, viz: two bulls' heads, which seem to be their great Manitou and protection. They are well daubed over with earth, and particular care is taken of them. There is laid on, or rather hung up, his arms, shield, ammunition, scalps of his enemies, and every thing he most values. 353

MORTAR AND PESTLE.

Next to this stage, stand the mortar and pestle, fixed firm in the ground, and the remainder of the hut from that to the door is vacant during the daytime, but occupied during the night by the horses. Then there still remains a large space in the center, around the fire, for the use of the family, which is generally swept clean once a day. 342 412 231

CORN STAGE.

Fronting the entrance of each porch stands a stage raised about eight feet from the ground, twenty feet in length, and ten feet in breadth, for the purpose of hanging up their corn to dry, in the fall; these stages have a tolerable good flooring, which in the fall is covered with beans to dry, and posts are erected upon them, on the tops of which are laid poles or rafters, to which the corn and sliced squashes are suspended in tresses to dry. When their harvest is over, they must have a pretty effect, but at this season of the year they are lumbered up with different kinds of drift-wood, of which they make their fires, and it gives a very ugly appearance to the villages. 343 251 313 372

DRIFT WOOD.

This wood they collect, in the spring, when the ice breaks up, and when great quantities of this wood floats down, the natives being expert swimmers, and so very active, that there is scarcely a large tree escapes them, until they have a sufficient stock for the year. I observed lying opposite to each village, an immense pile of this wood, and some trees of an amazing size. Commonly, when they collect the drift wood there come down numbers of drowned buffalo, that have perished in attempting to cross above, at a season when the ice was bad. These animals the natives are very careful to haul on shore, as they prefer the flesh in that state. [222] [268]

LIGHT HAIRED CHILDREN.

An extraordinary sight that struck me among these people, was to see several children, of about ten years of age, whose hair was perfectly gray, and bore a strong resemblance to aged persons. Those I saw were all girls. These people in general have not that strong coarse hair, so peculiar to the natives of North America; it is of a much finer nature, rather inclining to 142

[See Category 16, p. 302.-A.]